

2010 marks the final year of a three-year goal to raise \$4.2 million for student awards. The Gala is currently two thirds of the way toward that goal, having raised over \$2.8 million after two years.

As of the 2010 event, approximately **\$5.1 million** in total has been raised. 68% of this was raised in the last three years.

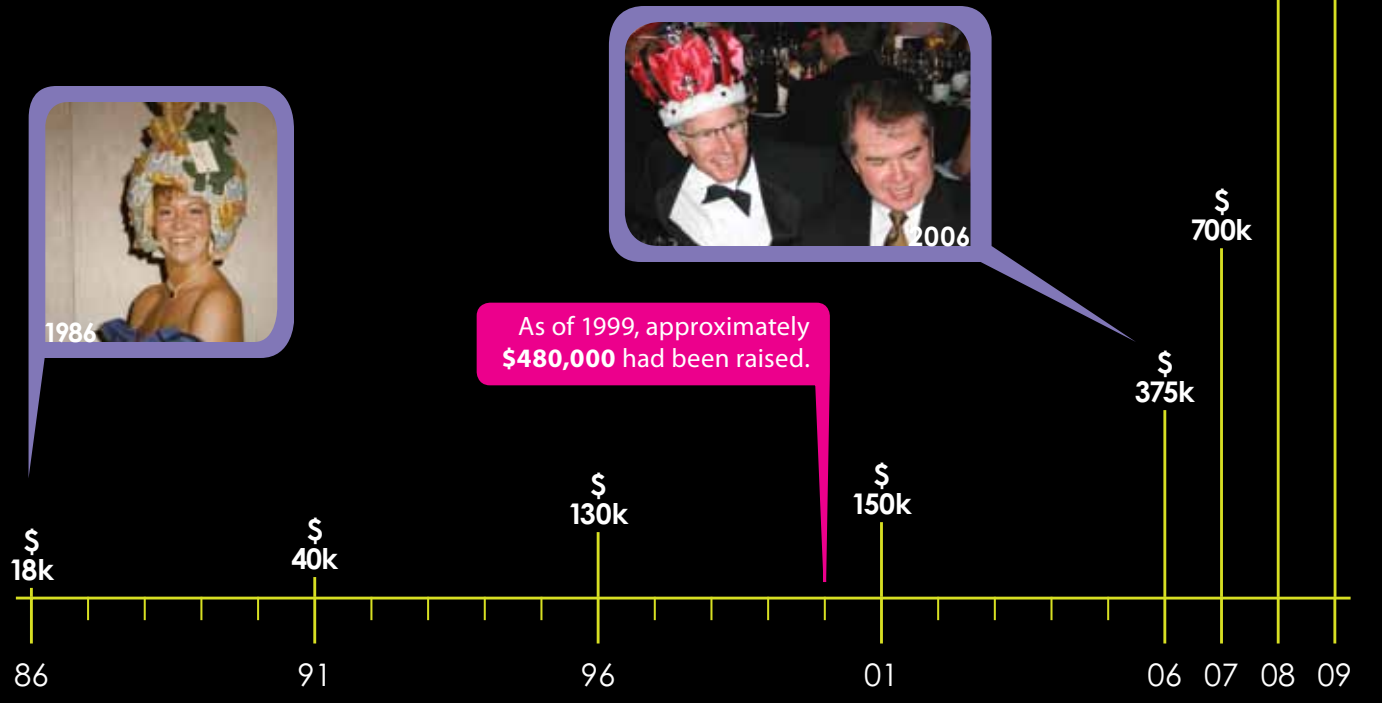


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Grant MacEwan University thanks the Mad Hatter's Gala sponsors for their generous support.

25th ANNIVERSARY

MAD·HATTER'S GALA

presented by

synergy building solutions



The Mad Hatter's Gala turns 25.

Celebrate 25 years of student access and success at the 2010 Mad Hatter's Gala presented by Synergy Projects Ltd. Grant MacEwan University's premier fundraising and community relations event.

PROCEEDS FROM the Mad Hatter's Gala go towards scholarships that recognize students with outstanding academic achievement in any program of study at MacEwan. Every net dollar raised at the Gala is matched by a generous donor through the Edmonton Community Foundation. These dollars are then matched by the Government of Alberta's Access to the Future Fund. This means that every dollar contributed to the Gala will translate into four dollars of support for students. Annually, this event unites over 700 of MacEwan's friends, alumni and supporters to make a real difference to MacEwan students, our city and our province.

MACEWAN



Dr. Paul & Nancy Byrne

"Education is an important key to the future of our city, our province and our globe. The more people who are educated, the better off we'll be."

For more than 15 years, this belief has driven Dr. Paul Byrne and his wife Nancy to support the Mad Hatter's Gala. Dr. Paul Byrne is the president and CEO of Grant MacEwan University and Nancy is the Honorary Mad Hatter for 2010.

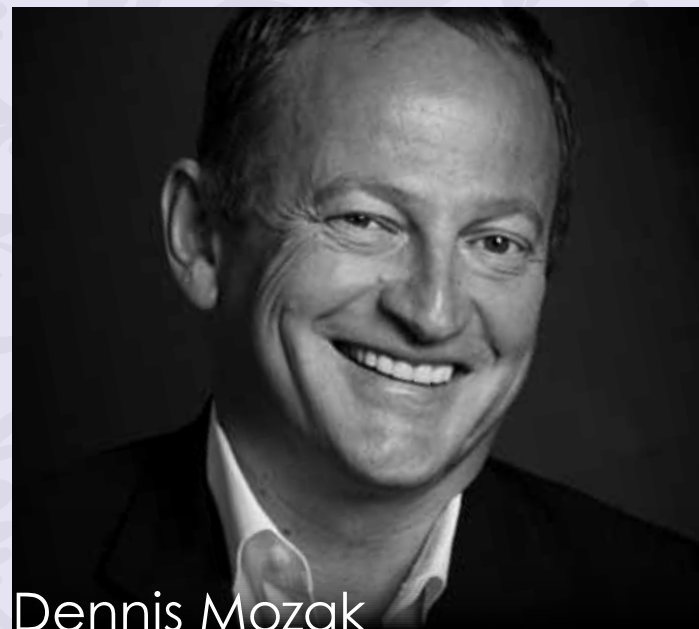
"MacEwan has always had very strong connections to the community," said Dr. Byrne. "The Mad Hatter's Gala is a positive example of how the community comes out to support the students."

Students receive scholarships from the Gala based on outstanding academic achievement. Scholarships are available in all programs of study and range in value from \$1,500 for diploma and certificate students to \$2,000 for students enrolled in degree programs.

When it comes to giving, it isn't just the financial contribution but also the gesture that's important, as Paul and Nancy witnessed at one particularly memorable Mad Hatter's Gala.

Dr. Byrne recalls the year that the Honourable Lois Hole, who was Lieutenant Governor of the province at the time, wore a handcrafted hat covered in daisies and orchids. She ended up donating her hat to the live auction, which resulted in a bidding war.

"It didn't even matter how much money was raised," said Dr. Byrne. "It was the gesture that counted."



Dennis Mozak

"Doing what is right." This philosophy drives Dennis Mozak's company, Synergy Projects Ltd., and is exemplified by his commitment to serve as title sponsor of the Mad Hatter's Gala until 2012.

Part of Synergy Projects' commitment to doing what is right includes supporting the community, which is why the company first became involved with the Gala.

"We initially supported the Mad Hatter's Gala because we believe in post-secondary institutions and in the importance of education," said Mozak. "Our relationship with MacEwan has evolved over the past few years and we were pleased to step in as the title sponsor. We're proud to support the Gala's vision of providing accessible education for MacEwan students."

It's a position Synergy Projects wouldn't have been able to take on when it first started.

"When we began 14 years ago, we certainly weren't in a position to be a supporter at this level," said Mozak. "In that time we've seen MacEwan grow in ways that resonate with our core values - innovation, building relationships and commitment to the community, to name a few."

Over the three-year partnership, the two organizations will celebrate some milestones together. While the Mad Hatter's celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, next year Synergy Projects celebrates its 15th anniversary.

The word synergy means "cooperative interaction among groups that creates an enhanced combined effect." It describes the relationship MacEwan has with the community through its students who go on to work in the community and through partnerships with organizations that see the value in supporting our future leaders.

"Our experience with the MacEwan team has been exceptional," said Mozak. "We've seen a willingness to create partnerships, to work together to achieve a common goal. I feel we actually make a positive difference for each other."



Crystal Graham

The Mad Hatter's Gala has come full circle for Crystal Graham, chair of the 2010 event.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Gala, which means 25 years of connecting with the community and raising funds for student awards. This long-standing tradition is something Graham grew up with, since her parents used to attend the Gala years ago.

"I remember my parents' excitement of dressing up and going to the Gala over 20 years ago, each with their special hat," said Graham. "And now here I am, years later helping students and looking for that special hat like my parents did."

The firm Graham works at, Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning Ltd., has supported the Gala for decades. She became involved personally with the event in 2008 when she was asked to volunteer on the committee, and for the past two years has acted as chair of the organizing committee. Despite the extra time it takes, it's a role she's happy to take on.

"It's been an amazing experience to work with the staff and students of MacEwan," Graham said. "And to talk with so many of Edmonton's business leaders, who are all extremely supportive of student learning. It does take time, but with the dozens of volunteers, sponsors and gala guests that rally together in support, it's not work, it's fun."

As the Gala celebrates the past 25 years of helping students realize their potential, Graham is looking towards the future.

"I know that MacEwan is deeply focused on student learning, with an engaged faculty and exceptional programs that foster student success. These students will become Edmonton's future thinkers, and helping them realize their dreams with such spirit, warmth and inspiration the way MacEwan does is something I can get behind."



1986



2010



Gurvinder Bhatia

Gurvinder Bhatia's commitment to the Mad Hatter's Gala has helped him make connections in more than just the expected ways - it's how he met his wife, marketing manager for MacEwan's Faculty of Arts and Science, Aimée Hill.

Bhatia first started attending the Mad Hatter's Gala in 2004 when he was asked to sit on the organizing committee. As owner of Vinomania, a wine and spirits warehouse in Edmonton, his primary role was to improve the quality of the wine and food served at the Gala. It was through volunteering on the committee that he met Aimée and the two were married last year.

Beyond the personal connections he's made through the Gala, Bhatia is proud to support quality education for all. "I firmly believe that access to education is integral for a healthy community," he said. "Finances should not be a barrier to learning. The scholarships and bursaries created from the funds raised by the Mad Hatter's Gala help to ensure access to quality education for our youth."

Bhatia has continued to donate his time to the Gala in different roles. He co-chaired the Gala in 2007, and served as chair of the Mad Hatter's Gala Advisory Committee in 2008. He sees the benefits of his work with the Gala in Edmonton where many of MacEwan's alumni live and contribute to the community.

"The quality of education provided by MacEwan is undeniable, as is the contribution its alumni make in our community. Alumni are present in all sectors - music, theatre, the arts, business and healthcare are just a few areas. Now with the ability to grant four-year degrees and with the change to university status, MacEwan graduates will play an even more prominent role in shaping the future of our community."



Greg Christenson

Greg Christenson, co-owner of Christenson Developments, never expected he'd ride in an army tank, but that's exactly where he ended up after one particularly mad Gala.

"The most fun I had at a gala was the year I sat as a guest of Dr. and Nancy Byrne with (Minister) David Hancock and Scott Howson," Christenson said. "Anne McLellan was our Deputy Prime Minister at the time and the whole table had fun with her. She was raising awareness for our Canadian troops and I was the last of three groups to buy 'Soldier for the Day' in the live auction. It turned out to be a blast, especially driving tanks - my friends still have stories from that day."

The Mad Hatter's Gala has come a long way since the first Gala in 1986, which had a goal to sell 250 tickets and ended up raising \$18,000. In contrast, the goal for this year's gala is to raise \$1.4 million, and attract 700 guests.

Christenson, who has attended the Gala every year since its third year, says that although it has evolved, some aspects remain the same. "The Gala's certainly grown, but it has very much of the same spirit, featuring local students and talent as the first events I attended."

For Christenson, contributing to the Mad Hatter's Gala is a way to build relationships.

"We want to build lasting relationships that can benefit our residents and our community. MacEwan is an important partner in Edmonton. It creates vitality, bringing youth and activity to downtown. We want to participate and be part of a bigger future."



Eric & Lorraine Young

Eric and Lorraine Young credit friends and family for inspiring them to give back to the community.

With parents who are active in the community, friends like Don and Marion Wheaton, and John and Barbara Poole as role models, the Youngs find that the desire to give back is contagious.

"When you're lucky enough to be around people like this, you can't help but have their good intentions rub off on you," Mr. Young said. "They exemplify a principle we live by, which is to give back generously to the community in which you make your living. We've tried to do just that."

It's a principle Mr. Young brings to his position as Chair of MacEwan's board of governors since he was appointed in 2004. In that time, he has brought MacEwan's priorities to the attention of government including a mandate change to offer undergraduate degrees, capital planning for the Robbins Health Learning Centre (opened September 2007), and a proposed Centre for the Arts and Communications at City Centre Campus.

The Youngs see an investment in education as an investment in the community.

"We believe that education is an opportunity to create a better community with less crime, fewer social problems and greater self awareness," said Mr. Young. "And if educating our youth is the best investment we can make in the future of this country, then we have an obligation to make sure that education is accessible and affordable."

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEROY SCHULZ